

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination of the captioned application is respectfully requested.

A. SUMMARY OF THIS AMENDMENT

By the current amendment, Applicants basically:

1. Editorially amend the specification.
2. Amend claims 1, 3, 10 and 11 without prejudice or disclaimer.
3. Cancel claims 2, 4-8, 12 and 13 without prejudice or disclaimer.
4. Add new claim 14.
5. Respectfully traverse all rejections.

B. PATENTABILITY OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fukumura (Japanese Publication No. 11-041408 (“Fukumura”)). Claims 10-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukumura in view of Funagoshi (Japanese Publication No. 05-037743 (“Funagoshi”)). All prior art rejections are respectfully traversed. Without acquiescing in the rejections, claims 1, 3, 10 and 11 have been amended, claims 2, 4-8, 12 and 13 have been canceled, and new claim 14 has been added. The following discussion is directed to the claims in their current form.

Independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to recite various additional features. Applicants respectfully submit that neither Fukumura nor Funagoshi, alone or

in combination, discloses each and every feature recited in either of amended claims 1 and 10. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections and objections are respectfully requested.

New claim 14 depends indirectly from amended claim 1, and Applicants respectfully submit that new claim 14 is patentable for at least the same reasons as amended claim 1.

C. AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Certain portions of the specification have been amended to explicitly set forth in text certain features already depicted in Fig. 1.

D. MISCELLANEOUS

In view of the foregoing and other considerations, all claims are deemed in condition for allowance. A formal indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the undersigned's deposit account #14-1140 in whatever amount is necessary for entry of these papers and the continued pendency of the captioned application.

Should the Examiner feel that an interview with the undersigned would facilitate allowance of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

SHIRAISHI et al.
Appl. No. 10/659,270

Respectfully submitted,
NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: 

H. Warren Burnam, Jr.

Reg. No. 29,366

HWB
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100